

15th AUGUST

It was on this very day in 1947 that transfer of political power took place in our country and out of the chain of the alien British imperialist rule, India emerged as the independent national sovereign...state.

On this very day, we recall the glorious anti-imperialist struggle of our fighting working people and pay our homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for ending alien foreign rule in our country.

The anti-imperialist national liberation struggle in which people from different strata, different classes participated, manifested two trends, both the compromising and the uncompromising trend, though it was the former trend that overall dominated the struggle. The masses of the working Indian millions participated in the struggle not only to end alien foreign imperialist exploitative rule and achieve political independence but also to end all sorts of exploitation—be it by the foreign capitalists-imperialists or by the national capitalists and thereby win real freedom covering all aspects of their lives. For it was only through the establishment of a socio-economic political structure free from all sorts of exploitation that the basic problems confronting their lives—namely, the problems of food, employment education, the problems relating to cultural, moral and ethical aspects of their lives etc. could be basically resolved and their lives could be led into a path of total prosperity.

It is a fact that through the transfer of political power, our country has gained its political independence. But the basic problems of the lives of our people have not yet been resolved. The aspirations of our people still remained unfulfilled.

The problem of food is an ever-growing problem in our country where most often famine condition develops at different parts.

... ..
The food problem is associated with three issues, namely, production, distribution and price of food articles.

In so far as production is concerned it is no doubt a fact that till now our country could not be made self-sufficient and still it has to depend on foreign

help. Modern methods have not yet fully been applied in actual process of food production for which we are still to depend on 'nature's boon'. But if we really want to increase our food production to ensure sufficient and continuous supply of adequate quantity of food to our poverty-stricken people, our agriculture must have to be mechanised and modernised. Some people may however think that this cannot be achieved within the existing socio-economic political structure. Even if land reform measures permitted by the existing socio-economic structure such as distribution of benami lands to the landless and poor peasants (a thing which in case of benami land with deeds prepared by giving back-dates for assignment should have to be done after acquiring them by confiscation preceded by detection), etc. are effectively carried out, the poor

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Martyrs' Day Observed

Calcutta, 11th August : In an atmosphere of reverence and determination "Saheed Khudiram Divas" was observed this morning in front of the statue of Saheed Khudiram Bose, the great martyr of the freedom movement of our country under the joint auspices of All India Democratic Student's Organisation, Democratic Youth Organisation, Pathikrit, Mahila Sanskrit Sangha and Komsomal.

Before the meeting started DYO music squad presented a few mass songs and with the opening song the meeting started formally which was presided over by Shri Dwijendralal Sen

Gupta, M.P.

Wreaths were placed at the statue of Saheed Khudiram Bose first by the president Shri Dwijendralal Sen Gupta, M.P. and then by Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee, SUCI, Shri Manatosh Chakraborty of Anushilan Bhaban, Shri Hemendra Mukherjee of Workers' Party, Prof. Subir Basu Roy of Pathikrit, Comrade Sanjit Biswas of AIDS, Comrade Halima Kabir of Mahila Sanskrit Sangha, Comrade Sourav Bose of Komsomal, Comrade Ganesh Das Gupta of UTUC (Lenin Sarani), Comrade Manik Mukherjee of Sara Bangla Sarat Satabarsiki Committee, Comrade Subir Mitra of Annyachokhe, Comrade Sanjoy Palit of Kabitirtha Khudiram Divas Ujjapan Committee, Comrade Nivedita Shaha of Jogomaya Debi College Students' Union, Comrade Abdur Rouf of DYO, Shri Anil Ch. Ghosh and by many other organisations and persons.

Sri Dwijendralal Sen Gupta, M.P. in his presi-

dential speech said that Saheed Khudiram was not just an individual, he was the symbol of the revolutionary youth and the revolutionary era of freedom struggle of our country. But the cause for which the great martyr laid down his life still remains unfulfilled. It is our task and we must take a vow today to devote ourselves to the fulfilment of the task, left to us, and for which the revolutionaries laid down their lives.

A resolution unanimously adopted at the meeting, demanded on behalf of the toiling millions of our country the following :

1) The history of the National Independence struggle be rewritten by giving Saheed Khudiram and other revolutionaries due recognition and the rightful place.

2) Proper arrangement be made to preserve the glorious memories of the uncompromising revolutionary freedom fighters.

3) 11th August, the "Saheed Khudiram Day" declared as a "National Day".

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We remember with solemnity the great martyrdom of Khudiram of undying spirit who stood for the uncompromising revolutionary trend in the national liberation movement to free the society from injustice, tyranny and falsehood.

At the foot of Saheed Kshudiram's statue (sitting left) Sri Dwijendralal Sen Gupta, M.P., presiding over the gathering and (in the right) Comrade Nihar Mukherjee addressing the gathering on the occasion of 68th Saheed Kshudiram Day.

Volume of capitalist production

Stalin in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* concluded: "It is evident that, after the world market has split and the sphere of exploitation of the world's resources by the major capitalist countries (USA, Britain and France) has begun to contract, the cyclical character of the development of capitalism—expansion and contraction of production—must continue to operate. However, expansion of production in these countries will proceed on a narrower basis, since the volume of production in these countries will diminish" (page 63). The writers of the article, *The Basic Economic Law*, in disputing this analysis of Stalin, state: "Equally wrong was his proposition that the overall volume of production in the leading capitalist countries was bound to drop in the post-war period."

Now, at the very outset, we would like to ask these writers, where did they get that, Stalin observed that "...the overall volume of production.... was bound to drop in the post-war period?" Stalin did not observe like this—at least not in the above-mentioned paragraph where he observed that "However, expansion of production in these countries will proceed on a narrower basis, since the volume of production (not the 'overall' volume of production) in these countries will diminish" (not "was bound to drop"). What kind of ethics is this that Stalin is being criticised for an observation which he did not really make? Is it not a distortion of facts? Perhaps these writers in their overzealousness to combat Stalin has missed to take note of what Stalin did really observe and what he really did not.

Moreover, these writers while disputing the analysis of Stalin, has separately taken out one part of his observation i.e., his comment on the volume of production (and that too in a distorted manner)

from the rest and kept themselves completely silent on the rest of the observation. But all should agree that if one really desires to understand the real significance of what Stalin meant by his comment that "...the volume of production will diminish", then he will have to try to understand it in proper context along with the rest of the observation with which it is inseparably linked up in the above-quoted passage taken from Stalin's book *The Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*. But, if instead of doing that, one separates it from the rest of the observation and attempts to understand the meaning it carries, in isolation from the rest of the contention along with which alone it is meaningful, and that too in a distorted manner as these writers have done, then, it is not only that he will misunderstand the real significance of the observation, it will tantamount to a wilful attempt to create misconception regarding what Stalin observed.

Furthermore, we cannot help but observe that these self-styled theorists, the writers of the article, *The Basic Economic Law* in their frantic bid to find fault with Stalin's proposition has failed to take note of what Stalin really contended in his observation.

Any man with an average intelligence would not fail to grasp the point that Stalin did never remark that the volume of production could never increase under any circumstances in any branch of industry in any particular country even for a certain period of time. What he really implied was that in the third phase of general crisis of world capitalism, capitalism would fail to keep up the rate of growth of production which it could maintain even after the worldwide monetary crisis of 1930. And as a general feature rate of growth would gradually show a declining trend. This of

course does never presuppose that even temporary increase of production may not be noted in any branch of industry in a particular country even for a certain period of time, under the influence of temporary factors including the artificial stimulants. But these temporary factors including the artificial stimulant cannot continue to operate for all time to come. They are sure to exhaust one day and the rate of growth (not the quantum of production) is bound to show the downward trend. It was in this sense and to explain this general feature of present day capitalism that Stalin remarked that "the volume of production will diminish." It is really pathetic indeed that our 'theorists' friends, the writers of *The Basic Economic Law*, as they have failed to grasp the real significance of Stalin's contention, they have failed to understand the reason or reasons behind the temporary up-ward trend shown by the volume of production in these major capitalist countries, since the termination of the second world war, notwithstanding the tendency of stagnation and decline prevailing there. And this has prompted them to reject Stalin's proposition as incorrect!

Moreover, when Stalin said that the volume of production in the major capitalist countries would diminish, he had in view the course of future events, the probable outcome of the disintegration of the single all-embracing world capitalist market and further contraction of the sphere of exploitation by the creation of the socialist system and market on the one hand and the entry of the resurgent nationalist countries in this already contracted market on the other. Probability is not immediate actuality. Between probable outcome and existing actuality there always exists an intervening period. The slight increase in the volume of production in these capitalist

countries does not establish beyond reasonable doubt that there will be no decrease in future.

Furthermore, the slight increase in the volume of production in the major capitalist countries is primarily due to four factors, (1) militarization of economy and arms drive, (2) renewal of fixed capital which was long over due, (3) greater economic expansion because of absence of Germany, Japan and Italy as competitors in the period immediately following the war and, (4) intensification of exploitation of the working class by the capitalists in these countries. Most of these factors, are no doubt, temporary artificial stimulants that we have already referred to, and hence cannot continue to operate for all time to come. They are sure to exhaust one day resulting in fall in the volume of production.

Khrushchev in his report to the Twentieth Congress visualised this very situation, when he said: "Today the capitalist world is approaching the point at which the stimulating action of many of the temporary factors is becoming exhausted. Some, for example, the large-scale renewal of fixed capital and the favourable situation in foreign markets, operated only during the period directly following the severe and prolonged war. Others are in general capable of bringing about temporary increase in production. The operation of the internal forces of the capitalist economy, on the basis of which it succeeded in raising production in the past, is becoming weaker. In order to advance production today capitalism has increasing needs of artificial stimulants." The logical corollary of Khrushchev's above analysis is that the volume of production in the major capitalist countries is bound to diminish, sooner or later; but all the same it cannot but take place. This is Stalin's proposition also. From the

above observation of Khrushchev at least one thing is crystal-clear. Khrushchev in his overzealousness to fight Stalin has failed to realise that the objective facts and observations that he himself has put forward to combat Stalin's proposition, has actually gone against him and substantiated Stalin's thesis! Nor can the so-called 'theorists', the writers of the *Basic Economic Law*, the ardent disciples of Khrushchev who most often parrot the dictums and contentions of Khrushchev against Stalin to contradict him, ever apprehend that they along with their mentor may be placed in such a tight corner while fighting against Stalin and his observations!

A few words more should be mentioned in this connection. Khrushchev in his report to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and Mikoyan in his speech before the said Congress obliquely referred to the passage quoted above and hinted that Stalin meant by general crisis of capitalism complete stagnation, a halt in production and technical progress. This is a travesty of truth. The words, "expansion of production in these countries will proceed on a narrower basis", occurring in the above passage from the *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* refute the idea of complete stagnation and a halt in production. These words, on the contrary, indicate expansion of production as well as the nature of production, the tendency to stagnation. This is quite in keeping with Leninist formulation. Lenin in his *Imperialism, the highest stage of Capitalism* said: "As we have seen, the most deep-rooted economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. This is capitalist monopoly, i.e., monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, and remains in permanent and insoluble contradiction to this

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Rise of Fascism in Italy and Germany (1)

[With the end of the Second Great War what were destroyed were the particular military machines of Fascist States of Italy, Germany and Japan but not Fascism as such.....

In this series of articles, we will present to our readers Fascism—its genesis, political, economic, cultural backgrounds with concrete events from the history of Italy and Germany, the *modus operandi* of the Fascist rules in these two countries as well as the general lessons from relevant extracts from the documents of International Communist Movement, speeches and writings of Lenin, Stalin and other leading figures as also other competent works in order to show the historical link existing between those events and experiences with the post-war phenomena. —Editor, Proletarian Era.]

The Background

Summing up the political-economic significance and more particularly the accentuation of the crisis in world capitalist system after the first world war, Lenin, in the Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920, gave a clear picture of the world situation and set down the tasks for the communists.

Lenin showed, "The war was waged in order to repartition the whole world. The war was waged in order to decide which of the tiny groups of biggest states—the British or the German—was to secure the opportunity and the right to rob, strangle and exploit the whole world..... And as a result of this war all capitalist contradictions have become immeasurably more acute..... fact shows that the 'mechanism' of world capitalist economy is falling to pieces.

"...The war has caused an unprecedented intensification of all capitalist contradictions and this is the source of the profound revolutionary ferment that is growing—during the war the people were put under military discipline, were flung into the jaws of death, or more under the threat of immediate military punishment..... Now that the war has come to an end, exposure has begun; there has been the exposure of German imperialism and its Brest-Litovsk peace; the exposure of the treaty of Versailles, which was to have been a victory of imperialism, but turned out to be its defeat... What

is taking place and will take place in the minds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of people when they realise that all the speeches about 'War for liberty' etc. were utterly false, that as a result only an insignificant number of people got rich, while the remainder were ruined and enslaved."

But though, "the economic position of the masses" as well as "the disintegration" "among the tiny minority of all powerful victor countries" were the two conditions for ripening of world revolution, Lenin sounded the note of warning, pointing out to the weaknesses of the working class movement. Lenin pointed out: "We have now come to the question of the revolutionary crisis as the basis of our revolutionary action... We must first of all note two wide-spread errors. On the one hand, the bourgeois economists depict this crisis simply as 'unrest' to use the elegant expression of the British. On the other hand, revolutionaries sometimes try to prove that there is absolutely no way out of the crisis.

That is a mistake. There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation..... it cannot be 'proved' that it is absolutely impossible for them to lull a minority of the exploited with some concessions, to suppress some movement or uprising of some section of the oppressed and exploited. To try to "prove" in advance that there is absolutely no way out of

the situation would be sheer pedantry of playing with concepts and catch-words. Practice alone can serve as real "proof" in this and similar questions. All over the world, the bourgeois system is experiencing a tremendous revolutionary crisis. The revolutionary parties must now "prove" in practice that they have sufficient understanding and organisation, contact with the exploited masses, determination and skill to utilise this crisis for a successful, victorious revolution".

Pointing out the weaknesses in the working class movement, in the absence of revolutionary leadership in different countries, Lenin said:

"Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working class movement is not proletarian socialism but bourgeois socialism. Practice has shown that the active people in the working class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not remain in power. This is proved not only by the history of the Kerensky regime in Russia; it is also proved not only by the Democratic Republic in Germany, headed by its social-democratic government: it is proved by Albert Thomas's attitude towards his bourgeois government. It is proved by the analogous experience in Britain and the United States. This is where our principal enemy is; and we must conquer this enemy. We must level this Congress, firmly resolved to carry this struggle on to the very end..... This is our main task." (Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. 3.) [Italics ours—Ed., P. Era.]

Analysing the class base of these opportunist trend in the working class movement, Lenin showed in his speech before the Third Congress of the International, 1921, that: "The petty-bourgeois democrats

in the capitalist countries whose foremost sections are represented by the Second and Two-and-a-Half International serve to-day, as the mainstay of capitalism, since they still influence the majority, or a large section of the industrial and commercial workers and office employees who are afraid that if revolution breaks out they will lose the relative petty-bourgeois prosperity created by the privileges of imperialism."

But the "growing economic crisis" which is worsening the conditions of the broad sections of the people and the "inevitability of new imperialist wars if capitalism is preserved", is "steadily weakening this mainstay"—Lenin also noted.

Yet, just after a month of the Second Congress where Lenin was sounding this note of warning in September 1920, the leading Italian journal 'Corriere Della Sera' wrote: "Italy has been in peril of collapse. There has been no revolution, not because there was anyone to bar its way, but because the General Confederation of Labour has not wished it." And here is the graphic picture about the social treachery of Italian social democracy from the pen of Gaetano Salvemini, one time Professor of History at the University of Florence: "Had the leaders of General Confederations of Labour and of the Socialist Party wished to strike a decisive blow, here was the opportunity..... The bankers, the big industrialists and big landlords waited for the social revolution as ship waited to be led to the slaughter. If a communist revolution could be brought about by the bewilderment and cowardice on the part of the ruling classes, the Italian people in September 1920 could have made as many communist revolutions as they wished." (G. Salvemini—The Fascist Dictatorship-1928, Vol. 2)

And the Secretary of the General Confederations of Labour gave a candid

confession of this great service to the bourgeoisie when he was begging of the fascist rulers, due appreciation of this service. Said, that traitor. "But after we had the honour of preventing a revolutionary catastrophe—fascism arrived." (Daily Herald—April 12; 1928, quoted in R.P. Dutt's book 'Fascism and Social Revolution'). How social democracy paved the ground for fascism's ascendancy to power in Italy and Germany we will take account in short. For a proper reading of these historical experiences, it would be necessary to bear in mind the important teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our revered teacher and leader and an eminent Marxist thinker of the era, that "Once fascism came out from the womb of social-democracy, now social-democracy is the last remnant of Fascism." (Comrade Shibdas Ghose's article in Ganadabi, 1949)

Fascists come to power in Italy:

"In Italy a wave of revolutionary feeling succeeded the war. The Italian Socialist Party rose in membership from forty-eight thousand in 1914 to one hundred seventy thousand. The reputation of the Italian Socialist Party had enhanced by the fact that during the war it took a resolute socialist line. In March 1919, it affiliated to the Communist International and went to election in November 1919 with a revolutionary programme of Soviets for Italy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. In this election it won one-third of the total votes cast, obtained 156 out of 508 seats and was the strongest single party. Its membership increased to two-hundred thousand while that of the Confederation of Labour with which it was allied increased to two-million. The Party also won control over two thousand communes, one third of the total. The extent of the revolutionary wave

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A FEW ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

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general environment. Never the less like all monopoly, this capitalist monopoly inevitably gives rise to a tendency of stagnation and decay. As monopoly prices become fixed, even temporarily, so the stimulus to technical and consequently to all progress, disappears to a certain extent, and to that extent, also the economic possibility arises of deliberately retarding technical progress. *** Certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never, completely and for a long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market (and this by the by, is one of the reasons why the Theory of ultra-imperialism is so absurd), certainly, the possibility of reducing cost of production and increasing profits by introducing technical improvements operates in the direction of change. Nevertheless, the tendency to stagnation and decay which is the feature of monopoly, continues and in certain branches of industry, in certain countries, for certain periods of time it becomes predominant." (pages 120-121). This was the position when capitalism, on the whole, was growing far more rapidly than before when capitalist market enjoyed relative stability. Now, after the Second World War, after the further deepening of the general crisis of the world capitalist system, distinguished by complete absence of relative stability of capitalist market due to the contraction of the traditional market by the creation of the socialist system and market on the one hand and the entry of the resurgent nationalist countries in this already contracted market on the other, the tendency to stagnation and decay has become more pronounced in more branches of industry and for longer periods of time. Does it not indicate the probability of fall in the volume of production in the major capitalist countries?

Stalin's Contribution to Political Economy

The writers of *The Basic Economic Law* have accused Stalin of "retarding the progress of the political economy of socialism, creating extreme adverse conditions for research work in social sciences." The communists all over the globe, would have benefitted much, had these writers given some examples illustrating how Stalin retarded the progress of political economy, and created adverse conditions for research work in social sciences. They, in a most unscrupulous way avoided the very way to prove anything out, have taken the path of mud-slinging and vituperation. Had the charge been even partially true, we fail to understand, how could Comrades L.D. Yaroshenko, A.V. Sanina, V.G. Venzher, A.I. Notkin and other openly carry out ideological struggles in support of their respective views on political economy of socialism against Stalin? If research work in social sciences was made difficult by Stalin, why did he not pack the committee appointed to improve the draft text book on political economy with persons supporting his views but, on the contrary, recommend, "to include not only the authors of the text book, and only supporters, but also opponents, the majority of the participants in the discussion, out and out critics of the draft text book" (*Economic Problems of socialism in the USSR*, page 52)? If Stalin retarded the progress of the political economy of socialism, how could the USSR make so spectacular a headway towards communism under his leadership? No doubt that the cult of the individual in general and Stalin cult in particular did incalculable harm to communist movement. It is admitted on all hands that the root cause of this anti-communist cult has to be eradicated. But the way to do that is not to reject Stalin's works lock, stock and barrel. If there

is any error in his formulations, that should be clearly brought to light backed by Marxian dialectical logic. Twaddle in mythical high-sounding utterances and demagogic assertions will not mend matters. But unfortunately this is the very path, which the writers of *The Basic Economic Law* have adopted to disparage Stalin. For example, to show their disagreement with Stalin's formulation they have quoted Lenin's observation that "we value communism only when it rests on a sound economic foundation". Is there any body on earth, who can understand from it the disagreement of the writers with Stalin, far less Stalin's error? They have reiterated, *ad nauseam*, such high-sounding expressions as "sound economic foundation", "Leninist laws governing the development of socialism into communism", "creative elaboration of the problem of the objective aim of socialist production", so on and so forth, but kept absolutely mum as to their concrete imports and how Stalin debased that sound economic foundation or violated the "Leninist Law's etc. Can these writers produce a solitary instance to show that they have improved upon and gone beyond the fundamental economic tenets of socialism propounded by Stalin?

It is not only that they have failed to go beyond the important and fundamental tenets of socialism propounded by Stalin, let alone improve them, over and above when ever they try to improve upon them they commit serious mistake. Thus, they have committed a serious blunder by their attempt to contradict and go out of the proposition of Stalin by rejecting an important feature of socialist economy that demand outstrips production and thereby they have endangered the socialist economy, particularly the agricultural economy. All other ways, Khrushchev and these so-called theorists are

Martyrs' Day Observed

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of SUCI in his speech said the era of Saheed Khudiram is the era of renaissance of our country. In the cultural field we have observed two distinctly different trends, one the compromising trend, the other the uncompromising revolutionary trend—the trend represented by Sarat Chandra and Nazrul in the field of literature. In the political field also there were two trends—one the compromising, the other the uncompromising revolutionary trend. The compromising trend wanted to attain freedom of our country through compromise with the British Imperialists...

The other trend, the uncompromising revolutionary trend represented by Saheed Khudiram and his compatriot revolutionaries wanted freedom of proceeding, particularly, in widening the sphere of commodity circulation vis-a-vis contracting the sphere of product-exchange instead of more and more limiting the sphere of the former coupled with a simultaneous extension of the sphere of the latter and in providing with incentive measures etc., are fraught with dangerous consequences of giving birth to revisionism and paving the path leading to the growth of the tendency of restoration of capitalism.

Let not bias mar the correct appreciation of Stalin. Let his works be read and re-read, defects and errors if any, correctly and precisely pointed out and the treasure house of Marxism-Leninism further enriched. This is the way of educating the class and the masses and of improving the standard of ideological consciousness of the communists.

our country not only from the British Imperial exploitation, rule and oppression, but from all sorts of exploitation of man by man. Today we are politically free from British Imperial rule, but the aspirations for which the revolutionaries laid down their lives are yet to be fulfilled.

... ..
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... ..
... ..

Comrade Mukherjee further continued to say that today when the people of our country from every walks of life and more particularly a large section of the students and youth community has become completely indifferent towards social problems are being swayed away in the typical current of self-centredness caused by the vacuum in the ideological field and so has lost all the necessary courage and boldness to stand against all social injustice and when the cultural degeneration has become a social disease—to recall, to cultivate and to take lessons from the glorious life of Saheed Khudiram, a living inspiration of sacrifice and dedication at this crucial juncture has assumed utmost importance.

In conclusion Comrade Nihar Mukherjee urged upon all, on this "Saheed Khudiram Day" to take the solemn pledge that—come what may youth should place above self the cause and interest of the people of our country; come what may they should remain uncompromising towards every form of injustice and social evils; for attaining truth being guided by and imbued with those moral teachings and conducting our struggles to acquire exemplary character like that of Saheed Khudiram and the great martyrs can we show our real respect to them and can become their rightful inheritors.

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may be gauged by the fact that in the September 1920 half a million workers in Northern Italy in response to a lock-out by the employers, occupied the factories. The revolution at that time was to be won almost for the asking."

".....the leaders of the main socialist party although affiliated to the Communist International had not yet shed their belief in the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism through the use of democratic machinery. They had not grasped the fact that the real dictatorship of the capitalists lay behind the democratic trappings and had to be fought resolutely and with careful preparation. They preferred to rely upon promises of the government rather than power of the workers." (R. Osborn—"The Psychology of Reaction" Victor Gollancz Ltd., London-1938)

Recounting the sordid event, R.P. Dutt comments in his book, "Fascism and Social Revolution":

"The bourgeoisie in this situation could only count on the reformist leadership to save them. But the reformist leadership did not fail them. It was obvious that the occupation of the factories if it remained a passive economic movement, with political power remaining in the hands of the bourgeoisie, could only end in the stultification and failure. The condition of the victory was that the movement begun by the occupation of the factories should be extended to the conquest of political power by the factories, which the bourgeoisie was then powerless to resist. Just this, the reformist resisted, insisting on confining the movement as "purely an economic movement".....The reformist leadership entered into immediate negotiations with Giolitti, and on September 19, a settlement was reached by which evacuation of the factories was conceded in return for 20 p.c. wage increase and a promise of a share of 'workers' control' in industry (The promise went the way of all such promises;

Rise of Fascism in Italy and Germany

the subsequent joint commission established to work out the details of the scheme grouped down; finally, the Government in 1921 introduced an emasculated Bill of Labour Control, similar to the German Works Councils Act). The essence of the settlement of the evacuation of the factories. The reformist leaders ordered the workers to leave the factories. What neither the employer nor the government, nor the police, nor the armed forces could effect, this was effected by the reformist leadership—to get the workers out of the factories and hand them back to capitalism." (Page 128-29).

The Executive Committee of the Communist International wrote in October 1920:

"The P.S.I. (Italian Socialist Party) acts with too much hesitation. It is not the party which leads the masses, but the masses, which push the party..... In Italy there exist all the necessary conditions for a victorious revolution except one—a good working class organisation" (Quoted in R.P.D.'s book).

Under the leadership of Lenin, the Communist International was demanding, as a first step, the expulsion of Turati and the reformist wing from the leading position of the Italian Socialist Party. But this could not be accomplished due to the opposition of the centrists' under Serrati. In the Second Congress of the International, Serrati set himself in opposition to Lenin and preferred unity with the reformist wing under Turati to unity with International Communism and the bulk of the party under his leadership passed out of the International. This Communist Party came into existence in Italy in 1921. But the political situation was fast changing.

After the fiasco of September 1920, "the idea spread among the people", says Salvemini that "the revolution has failed" and they grew discouraged".

The membership of the party and the trade union began rapidly to fall (from 216,000 in 1920 to 170,000 in January 1921). Whereas the Fascist Party, (Fascio Di Combatti Mento, founded in March 1919, under the leadership of erstwhile figure of Italian Socialist Party, Benito Mussolini), was gathering strength. Its membership rose from 20,000 in 1920 to 248,000 in 1921 (Quoted in R.P.D.'s book).

The fascists who could not win a single seat in the election of November 1919, was swimming in the revolutionary current by hailing the seizure of the factories by the workers as a great event, the 'second revolution' and was exploiting the widespread confusion and frustration of the workers, small peasants, war-veterans, in its propaganda which glorified strikes, food riots, calling for the hanging of speculators, the seizure of land by the peasantry, in tune with mass psychology of the victims of crisis-ridden capitalist economy of Italy in the wake of first world war.

In its programme, the Fascists of Italy called for the abolition of the monarchy and nobility, confiscation of war profits, international disarmaments, abolition of the Stock Exchanges, the land for the peasants, workers' control of industry. It gave the slogan 'Down with the state in all its forms', which suited well with the nebulous thoughts of the anarcho-syndicalists, the reflection of petty-bourgeois impatience, crying for justice.

And this pseudo-militant stand was put to practice immediately on the very wake of September fiasco by blood and fire against the workers, first at Bologna in November 1920 with the full backing and active help of the bourgeois government.

From the end of 1920, till May 1921 on the eve of election and after that till October 1922 when

Mussolini seized power the so-called 'Civil War' continued which was nothing but one-sided destruction of the working class organisations, forcible occupation of trade union offices and headquarters by the Fascists and conversion of these organisations into 'economic syndicates' of Fascist unions.

The chief organiser of the new Fascist union was Edmondo Rossoni. After the fashion of Mussolini, Rossoni had been before the war a revolutionary socialist,—extreme left. He had been a militant of the Revolutionary Syndicalists Industrial Workers of the World in the United States. When the war broke out, Rossoni, like Mussolini, suddenly discovered that he was a nationalist. He returned to Italy and in May 1918 with other socialists no less revolutionary and no less patriotic.....helped found the Italian Union of Labour with the programme of 'war against the capitalist system and all the institutions upholding that system'. In 1919 and 1920 this organisation adopted an attitude more revolutionary than that of the socialists-controlled General Confederation of Labour, thereby hoping to win the working masses. In 1921, after a 'secret travel' similar to that in which in 1914 had caused him to change allegiance a first time, he left the Italian Union of Labour and threw himself body and soul into the fascist movement.

"....The term 'Syndicates' by which the Facist Unions were designated, was the last remaining shred of the old revolutionary Syndicalist banner under which Rossoni and several of his co-adjutors had begun their career as politicians" (Salvemini—"Under the Axe of Fascism").

Regarding the so-called civil war, Salvemini writes:

"....Fascists began methodically to smash the trade unions and the

Co-operative Societies by beating, banishing or killing the leaders and destroying their properties. They made no distinction between Christian democrat and Socialists, between Right-wing and Left-wing socialists, between Socialists and Communists, or between Communists and Anarchists. All the organisations of the working classes, whatever their banners, were marked out for destruction because they were 'Bolsheviks'. The Fascists were provided with arms, ammunitions, and means of transportation by the military authorities and could almost always count upon passive and frequently even the active connivance of the police. Their opponents were divided among themselves and hence incapable of united action, insufficiently furnished with arms and without any arms at all and paralysed by the pro-Fascist sympathies of the police.....the fascists had to tear only individual reprisals, necessarily unco-ordinated and inefficient. Their victory was inevitable." (Ibid).

A leading American journalist, E. A. Mowrer records:

"In the presence of murder, violence and arson, the police remained 'neutral'.....When armed bands compelled the Socialists to resign from office under pain of death, or regularly tried and condemned their enemies to blows, banishment or execution, the functionaries merely shrugged their shoulders.....Sometimes, carabinieri and royal guards openly made common cause with the Fascists and paralysed the resistance of the peasants. Against the Fascist alone the latter might have had their own. Against the Fascist and the police together, they were helpless, and their complaints merely caused the authorities to arrest them as guilty of attempting to defend themselves. Socialists were condemned for alleged crimes committed months, years before. Fascists

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taken red-handed were released for want of evidence."

(E. A. Mowrer—Immortal Italy—p 361)

Evidences of Government's active support to fascist terror can be piled up more. Luigi Villari, semi-official spokesman in his "Awakening of Italy" notes that Geolitti "refused to interfere with the repressive actions of the Fascists, illegal though they were." A. Zarbeglio in his "Il Fascism (1920): says: "The Government more or less openly made use of Fascism." And regarding this "open use of Fascism", Mowrer writes: "Officers in uniform took part in the punitive expeditions. The Fascists were allowed to turn national barracks into their private arsenals" (Ibid. p.144).

"The normal procedure when a worker's buildings was threatened by the Fascist would be for a special force of armed police or Royal Guards to appear first 'to protect it'; these would search for and remove any arm, disarm, the workers in it, and prevent any workers' demonstration approaching it; the Fascist would then arrive with full arms and machine guns; the police forces would then declare resistance impossible and retire; and the Fascists would be left free to work their will on the defenceless building and disarm workers." (R.P. Dutt's Book).

Osborn writes: "Even then the Fascists offensive might have been beaten if the leaders (of Italian Socialist Party—Writer) had shown any revolutionary decisiveness. In spite of the disastrous wavering at the height of revolutionary surge of September 1920 when the workers had occupied the factories, the revolution might still have succeeded if the leaders had so desired."

But "reformism" and "centrism"... "preached to the workers to put their trust in legal and pacific method and the use of ballot. In May 1921, Geolitti held a general election, hoping that the reign of violence would

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have already broken the workers' forces. The total Socialist and Communist vote, nevertheless, actually exceeded the 1919 total, reaching 18,61,000 against 18,40,000 in 1919; 122 Socialists and 16 Communists were returned, totalling 138 as against only 35 Fascists.... the Socialist organ, 'Avanti' in illusory triumph, proclaimed: "The Italian proletariat has submerged the Fascist reaction under an avalanche of red votes. "The reality was otherwise. The 'avalanche of red votes' made no difference to a situation of 'civil war' (R.P.D.—Ibid).

So in absence of revolutionary initiative and education and in the face of Fascist offensive in propaganda and arms, while there was a steady inroad of fascist organisational hold on the working class organisations by an increase in number of Fascist unions from 64,000 in November, 1921 to 2,50,000 in January, 1922 and 8,00,000 in 1922 when Mussolini was about to seize power, the reformist leadership was seeking accord with the government.

The reformist leadership with Turati at their head, entered into a formal treaty of peace with Fascism. "On August 3, 1921, the Fascists-Socialists Treaty was signed proclaiming an end to all acts of violence. This was signed by Mussolini and his colleagues on the one side; on the other by the Executive of the Socialist Party, of the Socialist Parliamentary Group and of the General Confederation of Labour. The Communist Party refused to take part in this criminal comedy. The agreement was not worth the paper on which it was written. The fascist violence went forward and Mussolini explained the violation of his pledge by declaring that he had been "overridden" by his supporters.

"The final step of the reformist leadership was to endeavour to enter into a Parliamentary Ministerial Combination. After the resignation of

Facta in July 1922, Turati as the Socialist Parliamentary leader saw the King. When the attempt to secure agreed term for a ministerial coalition was unsuccessful, the reformist leadership conceived the idea of calling a general strike, at this late stage as a weapon of extra-parliamentary pressure to bring about the formation of a coalition government. The general strike was called on August 1st, without preparation, and was explained by Turati to be a strike in defence of the state". Under this conditions, the general strike was inevitably a failure, reaching only a section of the membership of the Confederation of Labour and winning no general response, because of the utter lack of serious preparation or fighting lead. The effect was only to play into the hands of the Fascists, who intensified their attack. The conditions were now complete for the final step of the open transmission of power by the bourgeoisie into the hands of the Fascists." (R.P. Dutt, same book).

In October, 1922, at Rome Congress, Serrati leadership recognised their fatal errors, and carried through the expulsion of Turati and the reformists, now grown to nearly half the membership and applied for re-admission to the Communist International. "Our fault", declared Serrati at this Congress, "is that we never sufficiently prepared ourselves for the events that have overtaken us... To-day, we believe it essential to abandon the democratic illusion, and to create a combative, active and audacious party."

But it was then, too late, the irreparable harm had been done; within four weeks Mussolini was in power. The message of the Communist International to the Rome Congress declared: "He cannot be called a leader of the proletarian masses who with great effort and after the lapse of several years comes to a correct conclusion, but rather he

who can detect a tendency at its birth and can warn the worker in time of the peril that menaces them." And now to the end of the story how that peril came in Italy.

"The resistance of the workers had broken by defeat. The moment was ripe for a decisive counter-revolutionary move. On October 28, 1922, the Fascists' "march on Rome" commenced. It was organised by 6 Army Generals and received the blessings of the Commander-in-chief of the army. The Facta Cabinet went through the form of proclaiming martial law; this only had the effect that civil authorities handed over their powers to the military throughout the country who promptly allowed the fascists to occupy the public offices, railways, post and telegraphic offices etc. After these had been successfully achieved, the King announced that He refused to sign the decree of martial law; martial law was accordingly withdrawn; it was in consequence declared impossible to "defend" Rome against the fascist. The Facta Cabinet which had been in negotiation with the Fascists, resigned. Mussolini waiting in safety in Milan was invited to come to Rome and form a Ministry. Comfortably placed in a sleeping car, Mussolini arrived in Rome on October 30. The theatrical performance of this Facist 'Revolution' where the King, the Army chiefs, the Facta cabinet as also behind the screen, the Social democratic labour aristocrats—all had very important roles to play and they were played well, ended with Mussolini and his Fascist party in power.

For four years till 1926, the facade of parliamentary democracy was maintained with parliament, existence of opposition party, trade unions etc. After that, all opposition parties were crushed, the workers' trade unions were brought under fascist control, their right to strike withdrawn. The Fascist dictatorship of the ruling class was realised.

Not for nothing, the Italian capitalists, the war profiteers, the land owners were pouring money into the coffers of Mussolini's party and their Army and police were training the Fascists. The fact of financial patronage from the bourgeoisie was proudly admitted but in an inverted manner by the Fascist leaders. A Fascist organiser Signor Cuzzi, declared in public speech, in March 25: "The industrialists are greatly mistaken if they think that fascism, having accepted their subsidies in 1919, 1920 and 1921 has given up protecting the workers." The official historian of the dictatorship, Professor Volpe admitted in 1928 that to the early Fascist movement, "members of the bourgeoisie" contributed their personal support and their money; and also that "war profiteers and frightened bourgeoisie were ready to give money in lieu of blood."

A Florentine fascist wrote in 1922: "One saw on arriving at the Fascist's headquarter the well-known surly and rapacious faces of war profiteers. These gentlemen were shabbily clothed and shod, but all had the inevitable diamond on their fingers—and we were obliged to accept their money because we needed it to stifle an evil, worst than they."

In the general election of 1924, the Italian Association of Joint Stock Companies obliged each one of its dependent companies to contribute to party's campaign fund one-fifth of one p. c. of its capital.

For the land owners, the Fascists decided a progressive levy, "in proportion to their financial means" but "should not be less than 200 lira." The Agricultural employers placed a levy on the sugar beet producers per quintal. It was, therefore, a parallel fiscal policy that the Fascist party introduced over the working people in Italy via the industrialists, land owners, war profiteers, employers. And in Germany, as we shall see, the features were the same,

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It is the Day for the People to take Pledge to Free them from the Basic Problems over casting their Lives

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phenomenon creating much agony and anxiety among us. In fact such an alarming situation in the cultural, moral and ethical field, coupled with the prevailing attitude of lack of philosophical tolerance towards others' views, logic and reason, naked barbaric practice of physical cowardly violence that of late has become rampant, the politics of rowdism and coercion—all these may lead to the creation of nothing but the breeding ground of fascist culture and fascism.

This all pervading state of moral and cultural degeneration which with days passing on is taking more and more acute shape, is being actively indulged in and encouraged by the oppressing classes who with a view to smashing the very backbone of our people are seriously

striving to use this as a weapon against the people for realising their heinous aim. Because, they too know it well that man can stand on his feet and raise his head even in a most helpless and wretched condition if he does really possess a high standard of culture, ideology and ethical values. And in this regard, the victory of the freedom fighters of Vietnam is no doubt a glaring example before all of us. Vietnam has shown that it is only the people with higher moral, ethical and cultural standard and inspired with noble ideology that can raise their head against social injustice, oppression and exploitation.

So far, we have been attempting, though of course in a brief sketch to elaborate and analyse some of the basic problems that still haunt our people who while fighting against

the British imperialists earnestly endeavoured to basically resolve all these problems. Their aspirations are yet to be fulfilled. They should however note that science and history teach us that unless socialism is achieved none of the basic problems of their lives would be entirely resolved. It is the lesson of history that only through the correct mastering of the noble teachings of Marxism-Leninism and adopting the correct base political line of the proletariat that one day they will reach their cherished goal.

So, today they should take the vow to earnestly endeavour and leave no stone unturned for liberating themselves from the grip and tentacles of all these basic problems that still haunt them. ...

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ment about Fascism as a mere "open terrorist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" failed to give a proper answer as to why it was necessary for the bourgeoisie at all to foster the Fascist forces instead of relying outright on a military dictatorship, i.e. applying brute force for submission.

So, when Klara Zetkin said in her report before the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1923, that:

".....historically Fascism is a punishment of the proletariat in western and central Europe for failing to carry on the revolution begun in Russia.", a bit of self-criticism would have been necessary to spell out the truth that it is a failure of the working class leadership to equip the workers properly, ideologically-politically—that was responsible as to why fascism could not be resisted effectively. And the casualty for this failure has been the entire working class movement.

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our beloved leader and teacher and an eminent Marxist thinker of the era, while drawing the correct lesson from these historical experiences, therefore, warns us:

"Moving under false notions that Fascism is altogether a new social phenomenon, that only the cross-currents of European politics and betrayal by the Social Democratic Parties

have given birth to these arch reactionary forces, that the economic crises of twentieth century capitalism have given rise to the fascist states and so on, nobody then cared to know carefully that no movement whatsoever—social, economic or political—is without relation to some philosophy and class culture and that practice is the expression of some idea, it is invariably dependent on some philosophical viewpoints. And so, in basing their interpretations of fascism on the simplified definition that 'fascism is the naked dictatorship of the capitalist classes' the different Communist Parties took no cognizance of its ideological root present within the social life, and specific philosophical outlook which helped the fascists organised themselves and thrived; in other words, they lost sight of the historical continuity of fascism maintained in its ideological plane. As a result, however intensive struggle the communists might have waged in economic and political fronts, their refusal to acknowledge their indispensable practical necessity of ideological war against fascism reduced all their efforts and sacrifices to a partial and one sided attack on the national jingoists." (From an article of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh—Socialist Unity, Vol. I, No. 9, 1st September, 1951).

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the method was almost common.

Fifteen days after Mussolini came to power in Italy, Lenin, in his last speech in the Communist International, at its 4th Congress, on the 15th November, 1922, had said: "The Fascists in Italy may for example, render us a great service by showing the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds. Perhaps this will be very useful." (Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. 3).

The Communist International at its enlarged Executive held in July 1923, explained Fascism as "a characteristic phenomenon of decay, a reflection of the progressive dissolution of capitalist economy and of the disintegration of the bourgeois state".

"Its strongest root is the fact that the imperialist war and the disruption of capitalist economy which the war intensified and accelerated meant, for the broad strata of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, small peasants and the intelligentsia, in contrast to the hopes they cherished, the destruction of their former condition of life and especially their former security. The vague expectation which many in this social strata had of a radical social improvement to be brought about by the reformist socialism, have also been disappointed. The betrayal of the revolution by the reformist party and trade union leaders... has led them to despair of socialism itself.....of their belief in the working class as the mighty agent of a radical social transformation. They have been joined by many proletarian elements who looking for and demanding action,

feel dissatisfied with the behaviour of all political parties.....

"The old allegedly non-political apparatus of the bourgeois state no longer guarantees the bourgeois adequate security. They have set about creating special class-struggle troops against the proletariat. Fascism provides this troops."

(R. P. Dutt—The International—Lawrence & Wishart, 1964).

If by the subsequent reading and analysis of the Communist International, it was meant that the success of Fascism in Italy was an isolated event and that it was possible because the Italian workers were less developed organisationally to combat the unmixed terror of the Italian "Black Hundred" or that they failed to resist the black legging of social democracy, how painfully inadequate they were. This rather superficial judge-